

## Horace Patrick Wilson

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Horace Patrick Wilson Enlistment No 157. Sergeant 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, enlisted 16<sup>th</sup> October 1914 at Helena Vale. He was born at Broken Hill in New South Wales (NSW) in 1896 to parents Kenneth Wilson and Elizabeth Gill.

Horace's family came to Western Australia in the late 1890's when he was a baby. Tragically his father died in a mining accident at the Mount Charlotte Mine in Kalgoorlie shortly after moving to WA in 1897 and his mother died shortly after in 1902.

It is noted in Horace's military notes that he did his schooling at Clontarf Orphanage, Victoria Park. His occupation on enlisting is noted as Farm Hand / Orchardist. He is single and his next of kin is his sister Christine Williams. Horace claims to be over 21 when he enlists, claiming he was born in 1893 but he would have only been 18.

Horace embarked overseas on HMAT "Ceramic" on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914. Horace first served on Gallipoli and his service notes here indicate he was a Stretcher Bearer. In early May he suffered an Alveolar Abscess which required 2 days rest. He was again sick in mid - October 1915 and

evacuated to Mudros then Lemnos suffering from jaundice.

When recovered he returned to the Gallipoli Peninsula in early December, by late December his Battalion returned to Alexandria with the troop withdrawal from Gallipoli. Here Horace was appointed Lance Corporal; by late July 1916 he was in France being promoted to Corporal. Mid - August during the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalions involvement at Mouquet Farm, Horace was wounded in action with gunshot wounds to his eye and face. He was sent to convalesce in England then returned to France late September 1916. On the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1917 Horace was made Sergeant. The 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion then saw action at Bullecourt in April; by June the Battalion was in Belgium at Messines then September they were at Menin Rd and Polygon Wood.

It was here that Horace was cited for a Military Medal which reads. **"Is brought under notice for splendid behaviour and gallantry during the operations near Zonnebeke on the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1917. At an early stage in the attack on the Red Line his Platoon Commander became a casualty. He took command of the Platoon at once and with splendid gallantry and fine initiative, led it forward. On reaching his objective, he got his men under cover as quickly as possible and whilst they were digging, he by his cool and cheerful example inspired confidence in them. Whilst the task of consolidation was in progress, he was wounded but he refused to go back to a dressing station and remained in the front line until the Battalion was relieved. He was instrumental in securing a number of prisoners and displayed great courage in attending to a great number of wounded under heavy artillery fire. He is strongly recommended for high distinction."**

In mid - November 1917 Horace contracted Influenza and was not discharged until mid - January 1918. He re-joined his Battalion in early February then was granted 10 days leave to the UK where he went to Ireland to visit his betrothed, Margaret Farrell. On his return from leave Horace was wounded a third time and died from these wounds at the dressing station on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1918.

He was buried at St Pierre Cemetery Amiens in France Grave XIII. E.2.

His name is mentioned on the RSL Wall in Victoria Park and in May 2015 his family put a memorial plaque in Kings Park, WA.

Courtesy Lyn Myles and Colin Wilson



St Pierre Cemetery Amiens Grave XIII. E.2



Memorial Medallion for H.P. Wilson

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Memorial Plaque in Kings Park May 2015

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Below are three letters published from Horace Patrick Wilson while serving in W.W.1

*First letter W.A. Record Saturday 30 October 1915 page 13*

## **CLONTARF BOY'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE**

### **"IMITATION OF CHRIST" STAYS A BULLET**

Corporal H.P. Wilson, an old Clontarf boy, has written from Quinn's Post to the Rev. Brother Bodkin, Superior of the Orphanage.

"Your welcome letter dated August 15, with scapulars enclosed, arrived here in due course. I was delighted to get the scapulars, which cannot be procured here. I have not yet been put out of action although I have had many narrow escapes. I think I told you in my last letter about the little book, "The Imitation of Christ", saving me from getting one through the chest. I am sending it on to you by this mail, so I hope you receive it safely. It will be well worth keeping, as I consider it was the means of saving my life. I was carrying it in my top tunic pocket just over my heart, having put it there purposely, the thought having occurred to me that it would stop a bullet. Bullets and shrapnel were falling very thickly at the time and how I escaped being hit in other parts of the body I cannot tell. After the pellet went through the book it just drew the blood slightly, bruising the flesh. Let me know if you receive it safely. Jack Lanigan has returned to the firing line again, being only slightly wounded. I believe Albert Beckett has been sent back to Australia, having been twice wounded. Floss McCarthy has been sent to the base sick, but I think he will return soon. We are expecting relief from the 28<sup>th</sup> any day now, as we have been going hard for the past five months. We have Mass celebrated here every Sunday. Confessions are heard at any time. The priest has his dug out just behind the firing line, hence he is right on the spot to attend to a wounded or dying man"

Clontarf Orphanage is justly proud of its gallant boys at the front. Rev. Brother Bodkin is its Superior and we may safely say that nobody, in the Commonwealth or outside it, takes a more lively or conscientious interest in his pupils, past and present, than this zealous member of the Christian Brothers. We may mention that over 80 Clontarf boys have joined the Forces.

*Second Letter W.A. Records Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October 1917 page 9*

## **A CLONTARF BOY AT THE FRONT**

The following letter, written by Sergt. H.P. Wilson, from the battle-field, was recently received by Rev. Brother Bodkin. The writer is an old boy of the institution and his many friends will, perhaps be glad to hear of him from the terrible storm-centre abroad.

"Dear Brother Bodkin, it is with very great pleasure I write you these few lines, hoping, please God, they find yourself, the Brothers and the boys in the very best of health. We are at present in the front line trench and having a pretty rough time. The artillery is very active and deadly on this particular sector of late and the Hun is also very busy with his heavy trench mortars. Besides that the recent rains have flooded the trenches and we are now obliged to stand knee-deep in the slush. We have one

consolation though and that is of knowing our opponents have to go through the same agony themselves. Today is the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. How different the conditions compared to the many I spent at Clontarf. However, I know we are not forgotten in your prayers and that means everything. I met Father Fahey the other day; he has been promoted to the rank of Major. He celebrated Mass and heard Confessions for the Brigade when we were out of the line. I think every man in the A.I.F. knows him. Give my very best respects to Brothers O'Connor and O'Brien. I hope they are well. I am always looking forward to seeing them again. Goodbye and pray for me. I remain your old pupil. HORACE PATRICK WILSON

The following old boys of the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion wish to be remembered to you all: Lieut. L. McCarthy, Privates McAllister, J. Francis, Mat Walshe, Corporal W. O'Grady and Private W. Cross."

*Third Letter W.A. Record Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July 1918 page 12*

### **SERGEANT H.P. WILSON, R.I.P.**

The following letter, written by Sergt. H.P. Wilson, who, after three and a half years at the front, was killed in action on June 26, has been received by Rev. Brother Bodkin, Clontarf Orphanage. Sergt. Wilson was an old Clontarf boy and like many another from that praiseworthy institution, he "did his bit" like a true hero.

"I am sorry I have kept you waiting so long for a letter, this being one of the few opportunities I have had of writing practically since the German offensive commenced. We have been through some very severe fighting during the past couple of months holding up the German advance and I think I can honestly say we have easily held our own. So far, thank God, I have come through safely, feeling none the worse for my experiences. We have inflicted terrible punishment on the enemy, probably more than he bargained for. At any rate he is behaving a little better now. We have several old offences to punish him for yet, such as the bombardment of Amiens and Rheims Cathedrals and the destruction of the beautiful big Convent at Ypres, not forgetting the execution of French and Belgian priests. I spent another couple of weeks in Ireland recently and had a most enjoyable time. I went from Dublin to Kilkenny and then to Waterford. While in the latter place I went for a drive out to Kilbride and around the Ballyscanlan Lakes. From Waterford I went up to Kilarney, spending a few days in County Kerry. The scenery is beyond doubt the most beautiful I have ever laid eyes on and the Irish people are the kindest and best natured race in the world. Everywhere I went I was treated as one of their own and everything possible was done to make my stay a pleasant one. As long as I live I will never forget the kindness extended to me in the Emerald Isle. Every Australian soldier I have spoken to who has been to Ireland on leave has told me they would never go anywhere else for a holiday. As for myself, I have every reason to be proud of the country, considering that in the very near future I am to be married to an Irish girl, who in my opinion one of the finest Catholics a man could wish to meet. By the way, I am very pleased, dear Brother Bodkin to know you were satisfied with my choice and approved of it. I am certain I will never regret the step I am taking. And

now I must conclude, as my time is just about up. Give my best respects to the Brothers and ask them to remember us in their prayers. Good-Bye”

### **The connection of John Hannigan to Horace Patrick Wilson**

*Below is John Hannigan's letter to his sister Minne when he was wounded at Gallipoli and he mentions his friend Wilson from the same Company. John and Patrick enlisted at the same date and place in 1914 and were both placed in the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion "C" Company which trained at Blackboy Hill so they were friends before they went to Gallipoli.*

14/9/15

St Mark's College

No 2 General Hospital London

Dear Minne,

I know you were surprised to get my telegram today I received it alright. Well Minne I had a narrow escape a shell burst and buried me and all my mates either got killed or wounded that was at the spot at the time. I have not seen any of them since. I was four days in Malta and then was sent on here to London. I need not tell you how glad I was to be coming so near home. I am alright now but weak the doctors reckon that some of the fumes is still in my inside. Well Minne I expect to go home for a few weeks when I go to the depot it's some place near London. **My mate Wilson** was alright when I left but the Turks had them cut off. He was not with me when I met with the accident so I think I will have to go home without him. I wrote to Michael Duggan today if he is still in the same place. Remember me to father and all enquiring friends.

Hoping to see you very soon, so long for the present.

I am your loving brother,

John Hannigan. xxx

*John Hannigan was born in 1889 at Tramore, Waterford, Ireland according to his enlistment records. This is also where Patrick Wilson's fiancée lived at 19 Patrick Street Tramore according to the 1911 Irish Census and Patrick's will below. The will was changed in September 1917 which indicates he must have become engaged shortly before he changed it to include her.*

12654

W I L L

In the event of my death I gave £200 to Miss M. Farrell. Patrick Street T'Amore Co- Waterford Ireland. £30 to my Sister Mrs Bretag Hart Avenue North Perth, W. Australia. £30 to my Sister Mrs H.T. Williams. P.O. Gnowangerup W. Australia £51-10- to my Brother Kenneth Wilson Martha Street Midland Junction W. Australia and the remainder to Michael. H. O'Connor P.O. Brownhill W. Australia. The above includes deferred pay (103-18-)

Signature Horace Patrick Wilson

Rank and Unit Sergeant 16th Battalion A.I.F.

Date September 30-1917.

Previous Will cancelled  
H.P. WILSON

Certified to be a true copy of will extracted from Pay Book of No.157 Sgt WILSON "MM" Horace Patrick 16th Battalion AIF (Deceased)

*J. Hunter* Cpl  
Estates Branch  
Adm. Hqs  
London

Checked *Jones* Cpl 23/7/18



Headstone for John Hannigan at Fremantle Cemetery



John Hannigan c1914

*Camp Chronicle (Midland Junction, WA : 1915-1918) Thursday 14 Dec. 1916 page 3*

### **THE DEATH OF HANNIGAN A HERO AND A SOLDIER.**

Thousands who knew not Private Hannigan personally knew of him through the pages of the 'Camp Chronicle,' and it is with deep regret that we have to announce the death, which took place at No. 8 General Hospital at 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

Hannigan — “Paddy,” as he was called by his pals, and he had hundreds —was a native of Traymore, Ireland, and early in life took to the sea. He was well known in Cardiff (South Wales), and served for seven years with the Welsh Regiment. After his discharge he took to the sea once more and was engaged on the boats trading to North West ports from Fremantle. All along the coast Hannigan was well known.

On the outbreak of war he was one of the first to enlist, and one of the first to leave as battalion stretcher bearer. He was at the landing on Gallipoli and was recognised as one of the bravest men there, being mentioned four times in despatches. Thin, slim, but wiry as they make them, he performed prodigies of valour, and many a man alive today owes it to Paddy's energy, forethought and courage. Returned men again and again tell of his deeds, but Hannigan never spoke of them and disliked their being mentioned. One instance we might mention. In May last a soldier minus a leg returned from the front, and on arrival at No. 8 General Hospital asked for Hannigan. He was shown into 'G' Ward, and there lay Hannigan. The maimed man made for his bed, and embraced Hannigan, the while tears streamed down his cheeks. Turning to the rest of the patients he said: —“Paddy here carried me two miles on his back with my leg shattered and all to pieces, and the shells were bursting round. Twas a hot

corner. We had to stop and lie low, and I wanted him to leave me, but he got me in all right." This is only one of many tales of heroism.

Hannigan was severely injured several times, and was buried thrice. He returned to Australia in December last year, and it was at once seen that his lungs were terribly affected, and the medical men gave him only a few months to live. He bore up well and took his fate as a Stoic and brave men would. He was full of native wit. In Fremantle he was deservedly popular with one and all, and became one of the port's identities.

Of late he failed quickly, and on Saturday was so ill that he entered the Base Hospital once more. A representative of the 'Chronicle' saw him only a few hours before he died; and he knew well his passing was near, but was cheerful as ever, had a joke ready and asked that he be remembered to all who knew him. "Tell them to buck up and tell the boys to join, because we must win the war," said Hannigan. As evidence of his thoughtfulness, one of his oldest friends was Mr. Button, of the Spring Park Hotel, "but," said Hannigan, "don't tell him I'm dying, because it will make him think of his son's death."

Such a man as Hannigan was compounded of the stuff of which heroes are made. He was always kindly, always a gentleman in the best sense of the word. He will be much missed but long remembered. Of him may it be truly said, "He did his bit." And now may he rest in peace. Hannigan is gone, but the spirit of Hannigan lives on and will still live. West Australian may well be proud to remember that he served with them.

The funeral takes place at 10 o'clock this (Thursday) morning.